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UNCLAS ABUJA 000911

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SUBJECT: WGSARS01: NIGERIA REPORTS SARS FATALITY IN KANO

1. A Ministry of Health official confirmed media reports that a Taiwanese businessman died of SARS May 9 in Kano. The official told Emboff May 15 that six workers at the hospital that treated the businessman subsequently had fallen ill, but all have since recovered. The Ministry has reported this case to the World Health Organization (WHO), the official noted. He said two alleged cases in Port Harcourt reported by the media have not been confirmed. The Ministry did not believe these were SARS cases.

2. The Ministry of Health's Emergency Procedures and Response Division has established a SARS surveillance program in coordination with the WHO. The official noted that should SARS spread in the general population, it will be difficult to quarantine carriers of the virus from others suffering from diseases with similar symptoms, such as malaria. Comment: Most Nigerian medical facilities are unlikely to have sufficient technical capacity to definitively diagnose SARS. In fact, it is our understanding that the case reported to the WHO was based on a symptomatic rather than laboratory diagnosis. End Comment.
JETER